

6/4/07

To: CINMS Advisory Council

From: Greg Helms, Conservation Alternate

Re: Conservation Working Group Report, 5/10/07

The Conservation Working Group (CWG) met on May 10, 2007. Members present: Greg Helms, Vice Chair (The Ocean Conservancy); Shiva Polefka (EDC); Jean Holmes (LWVSB).

Other participants included Paul Petritch, Greg Haas and an additional representative from Rep. Capps office, two representatives from a Santa Barbara county abalone farm, The Cultured Abalone, Inc., including Douglas Bush.

CINMS staff: Sean Hastings.

I. CINMS Management Plan

Sean described the additional work related to coordinating state and Sanctuary regulations for small vessel grey water discharges that is being prepared by Mike Murray for a supplemental DEIS to be released for public review in advance of finalization of the management plan EIS.

II. CINMS Federal Waters MPAs

Sean explained the contents of the newly published FEIS for the federal portion of the Sanctuary MPA network, and indicated a proposed final rule would be published in the federal register in the coming week, which it was. Sean discussed the "response to comments" section and some of the issues dealt with in this section, explained certain figures and values regarding the MPA network, indicated that in essence, Alternative 1c was chosen by NOAA, but that the administrative record would remain open in the event the Cal. Fish and Game Commission proves unable to close the gaps between state MPAs and the seaward boundaries of state waters. Sean fielded numerous questions including issues regarding co-management and memoranda of understanding for enforcement, monitoring, outreach and management.

III. Open Ocean Aquaculture Report

Shiva explained the process by which the report is being finalized for possible adoption by the SAC. He discussed the process of receiving and integrating comments from SAC members, highlighted the prominent substantive changes that resulted from reviewer feedback, and distributed copies of the recommendations and an itemized list of substantive edits. He indicated that comments and requests for pdfs of the report or the changes list could still be submitted to him at shiva@edcnet.org.

Discussion ensued about the current and emerging state and federal policy and permitting frameworks, and how the SAC and CINMS staff can effectively address future aquaculture within this evolving context. Representatives from the local shellfish aquaculture operation commented, and offered that a lead agency with a workable permitting framework is needed so that they can pursue additional local aquaculture. They also indicated that quantitative “thresholds of significance” are needed to define what the industry should strive for in terms of impact reduction.

IV. CINMS CWG rep visit to MBNMS CWG meeting

Shiva summarized his trip up to Monterey to speak to the MBNMS Advisory Council CWG, which was done at the request of Steve Shimek, MB CWG chair. The MB CWG is interested in pursuing the conservation initiative model developed by the CINMS CWG, in which emerging issues are rigorously reviewed, packaged in reports along with management recommendations, and presented to the SAC. Shiva also described how the visit and talk lead to discussion and brainstorming on future collaboration between west coast CWGs (starting with the open ocean aquaculture issue), which sparked discussion of its own at this meeting.